

26 September 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: D/DCI/NIPE

SUBJECT: 20 September 1967 Meeting  
with NSA on the NIPE

[redacted] Sensor Study

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1. On 20 September 1967 with [redacted]  
[redacted] I visited [redacted] at NSA to discuss our [redacted] collection system study. The impression given me by General Carter's letter of 11 September 1967 was that we could outline some positive steps to, first, agree to or improve the model, and, second, apply it to collection systems useful in FY 1969 in order to furnish some useful information for program decisions.

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2. The discussion started with [redacted] listing some efforts which NSA were being asked to support, including ours, [redacted]  
[redacted] and a couple of [redacted] studies, as well as a [redacted] imposed study of [redacted]. Their first point was that this was a great burden to them. One possible solution they discussed was a community effort to study all of these (and other studies) in order to decide which studies should be done, this to be done presumably prior to doing any substantive studies.

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3. The second point raised by the NSA men was that they were as yet unconvinced of the usefulness of a study of one problem, for example, [redacted]. Their view evidently related to an orientation to collection systems rather than intelligence problems and their preferred approach would be to evaluate the capabilities (expressed as information furnished) of one sensor against all threats rather than evaluating parts of many sensors against one threat. Thus, they would, at this point, prefer a [redacted] study to say [redacted] study. The fact that one sensor's value for solving many intelligence

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problems depends on what other sensors do against these same problems seemed to them to be less of a limit on study usefulness than the fact that one sensor's value against one intelligence problem obtained by considering all sensor's contribution to the solution of that one intelligence problem does not necessarily represent the total value of that one sensor. The NSA men seemed so committed to this point of view that they expressed their belief that it might even be dangerously misleading to measure the capability of sensors against only one threat.

4. Their third point was that, even if one could believe that evaluating sensors against a single intelligence problem could furnish useful information, they were not convinced that [redacted] problem was the best threat to start with. In fact, they were not even convinced that the [redacted] problem was a useful one. Their solution here again was a community effort designed to select the best intelligence problem to work on.

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5. I was unable to convince them, first, that orienting the evaluation of sensors towards solving a single intelligence problem was a necessary and useful first step towards complete sensor evaluation, and, second, that the [redacted] problem was probably as good as any other since it related to an important threat, involved lots of money and already a lot had been done on it. Thus, our meeting ended with little progress.

6. We did agree to furnish them with the new version of

[redacted]'s writeup when it becomes available (probably in two weeks), and they agreed to look at it again. I believe it to be quite necessary for us to examine this writeup critically in order to eliminate the parts which have furnished NSA obvious points of objection.

7. I am attaching a draft reply to General Carter's letter for your use as you see fit.

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[redacted]  
ASA/D/DCI/NIPE

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D R A F T

[redacted]  
25 September 1967

Dear Pat:

I was pleased to receive your cordial letter of 11 September 1967 and to learn that you will help us in our efforts to furnish more useful information relating to management decisions on programs. I too agree that a sincere community-wide effort is an absolute necessity if we are to make any progress on the hard and complex problems facing us all.

I share your concern about the total usefulness of single threat analysis when a large part of our expensive collection systems are multiple purpose. But we must make a start somewhere. Our study of the usefulness of collectors against the [redacted] problem may not, by itself, give us much information useful to program decisions, but then again it might give us some, and it will certainly serve to teach us how to proceed with analysis for other threats. I believe that [redacted]

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Study applied to [redacted] problem will add further insight on both the methods and the substantive total evaluation of collectors systems.

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My people have met with yours and discussed our mutual program evaluation problems. In spite of the reported extensive discussion of the complexities and perhaps some conceptual differences, I believe

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that we must press forward, seeking some mutually agreed upon course of action. We will work further with your people to insure their complete understanding of the methodology of [redacted]

but we must recognize that our methodology represents data handling and integration processes perhaps outside of NSA's primary responsibility and experience. As I see it we have developed this methodology as a model of what really happens to collected data.

Our illustration, using historical data and roughly estimated costs, seems to have been interpreted by your people as approaching the stage where community program decisions can be impacted. Under this interpretation the conceptual and mechanical processes are questioned rather than the quality of the input data. My position at this time is that we should improve the input data first and then the relative importance of deficiencies and inaccuracies in the mechanics can be reexamined in a real world environment. I would appreciate your support along these lines.

JOHN A. BROSS  
D/DCI/NIPE

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